THE DAILY CLIPS

February 17, 2009

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
State Views

Tuition burden heavy enough

News & Record, Greensboro

North Carolina college students can't afford too much good news like this:

System President Erskine Bowles last January urged the UNC Board of Governors to cut the proposed average tuition increase by 33 percent.

In other words, students (and parents), you're going to pay more. The average increase would be a slightly more bearable 2.8 percent instead of the previously proposed 3.8 percent.

If the Board of Governors agrees.

Higher education is under financial pressure, which is no surprise in this economy. State budget cuts are coming, but costs are rising. When it comes to college costs, increases often outpace the rate of inflation. It isn't cheap to keep up with the latest ideas and technologies, but an outdated education isn't worth much.

The trouble is, many students and their families are strapped. If Dad or Mom loses his or her job, where does the money for tuition come from? If the student can't find a part-time job, how can he or she meet other living expenses, which likely would increase by more than 2.8 percent?

Bowles said some of the additional tuition revenue would go back to deserving students in the form of financial aid. That's no guarantee that all needs would be met. Financial aid usually is determined on the basis of the previous year's income. In this economy, incomes are drying up overnight. There will be no avoiding the fact that many students will be required to pay more when they have less. Some will drop out, which is not the path to long-term prosperity.

A fair tuition increase across the UNC system will be no increase. N.C. A&T doesn't plan to raise tuition, and its sister institutions should follow suit. Cost savings should be en-
Darts & Laurels

County on fire

Darts — To dry conditions and high winds that fueled several brush fires this week, scorching more than 150 areas of land. Firefighters have been busy with blazes in the southeast and north of Pitt County, before responding Thursday night to an unrelated fire at Ayden’s famous Skylight Inn restaurant. Thanks to the men and women who battled those fires this week, which was no easy task.

Day of love

Laurels — To Valentine’s Day and the abundance of love in the air today. While some are quick to dismiss the day as a gimmick advanced by florists and greeting card companies, Valentine’s Day provides an opportunity to express affection in the most open and bold of situations. Use it today to tell the ones you love how much you care.

Laurels — To the 100th anniversary of the NAACP, which was marked this week in suitably celebratory fashion. Founded on the centennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth, the NAACP has spent a century finding racial injustice and pushing for a more equal America. Those efforts have been fruitful and life is better for Americans of color, but there is much work that remains.

Darts — To the first child death in North Carolina from the flu this season, according to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. The flu often peaks during January and February and the state is reporting increased instances of the illness in North Carolina. Those who have yet to be vaccinated can still protect themselves.

Laurels — To some measure of progress this week over how the city defines restaurants and nightclubs. The City Council’s proposed dining and entertainment ordinance was sent to the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration, where it will receive a public hearing. It brings Greenville a step closer to resolving a contentious issue that has spanned nearly a year.

Darts — To the state’s need to borrow $13 million from the federal government this week to pay for two days of jobless benefits for North Carolina’s growing number of unemployed. Though the state has a significant line of credit it can use interest-free over the short term, the need to borrow demonstrates the impact of the economic downturn on North Carolina. Getting people back to work must be priority No. 1 for Raleigh.

Laurels — To East Carolina University for making every effort to avoid layoffs even as it deals with a budget reduction that could exceed 7 percent. With state funds so scarce, universities are being asked to do more with less, and ECU is no exception. Officials pledged this week to try doing so without job loss.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
Don't put off ECU's dental school

BY MIKE HUGHES
Comment on this story

RALEIGH - If you think North Carolina has done a good job of providing dental health care to its citizens, take a trip east of Interstate 95. Way down east. The gap between North Carolina's affluent regions and rural areas is as plain as the smile on your face. Or, in too many unfortunate cases, the lack thereof.

The economic struggles of Eastern North Carolina are no secret, and the recession has made a bad situation worse. Poor dental health goes hand-in-hand with low income, high unemployment and few prospects. Our classical images of poverty almost invariably include misaligned or missing teeth.

But poor dental health isn't just a cosmetic problem. It is a key factor in poor overall health. Having a mouth of broken, painful teeth leads to bad eating habits (resulting in obesity, diabetes, heart disease and a host of other disorders). Perhaps even more importantly, it leads to low self-esteem, which cripples its victims' dreams and aspirations.

Improving dental health is an important, and underappreciated, part of breaking the cycle of poverty in rural North Carolina, and it is time to help our citizens who've been left behind by the systems in place. As a news story earlier this month noted, more than half of North Carolina's counties have fewer than three dentists for every 10,000 people. Four counties have no dentists.

In 2006, plans were approved to build a new dental school at East Carolina University. Today, the school is preparing for its first class in the fall of 2011. Pending appropriate state funding, the school will graduate 50 dentists in the middle of the next decade.

In the meantime, the school will set up clinical service learning centers around the state -- in the rural east and the rural west -- to train aspiring dentists and provide care to the state's neediest.

Admission policies will emphasize recruiting and accepting students from these same underserved areas, which increases the likelihood of graduates' returning to those areas to practice.

If that strategy sounds familiar, it should. It's the same critical mission that the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina has been fulfilling for more than 30 years. It's the same mission East Carolina University has been fulfilling in the region for a century.

My late father, a professor of pediatrics at the medical school, believed deeply in that mission, because he saw firsthand how it changed lives. In the early 1980s, every couple of weeks, Dad rode with his colleagues, sometimes 90 minutes each way from Greenville, to staff clinics in places like Swan Quarter and Columbia, among other rural areas. They saw countless examples of the unfathomable disparity in the quality and availability of medical care between the state's population centers and its rural regions. In many cases, Dad was the
first doctor those children had ever seen.

That critical work continues today and has expanded significantly. The new dental school is the next step.

In November, Dr. James Hupp left his job as dean of the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry to become founding dean at the East Carolina dental school. Hupp has significant experience in developing comprehensive programs and curricula to meet the needs of rural communities, and he is excited about the prospect of building a dental school from the ground up.

Unfortunately, in the midst of the recession, the funding needed to recruit faculty and pursue accreditation is at risk, posing a dramatic quandary: The new dental school cannot recruit students until it is accredited. It cannot get accredited if it can't get sufficient funding this year and next to hire faculty and develop its innovative curriculum.

Hupp and other university officials are working to ensure that this message gets across to the General Assembly, the UNC Board of Governors and anyone else who will listen.

Eastern North Carolina stands on the brink of something big -- a basic building block to a better, healthier tomorrow for thousands of people in unserved and underserved areas. Addressing the region's dental health needs has been a long time coming, and further delay for lack of funding would only perpetuate the disservice that the region has suffered for decades.

Mike Hughes of Raleigh is a member of the ECU Board of Visitors.

Comics, crosswords and coupons... only in The N&O print edition. Subscribe Now!

© Copyright 2009, The News & Observer Publishing Company

A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company
Editorial:
Published: Feb 16, 2009 07:11 PM
Modified: Feb 17, 2009 06:05 AM

UNC's chance

Community college students gain hope from partnership with the state university system.

Comment on this story

Christina Edmiston knew when she graduated from Cary's Green Hope High School two years ago that she wasn't the type of student who'd be able to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a school that admits top high-schoolers from around the state and the nation. As she told The News & Observer's Eric Ferreri, she didn't have the grades or the money. But she wanted an education.

And so there were the early mornings working at Starbucks, and then afternoons at Wake Tech, a community college. She was unsure what she'd do after that, although she did want to transfer to another school. Now, thanks to a program called the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP), Edmiston will begin taking classes at UNC-CH in the fall toward her goal of becoming an elementary school teacher. Let's hope her cycle of determination puts her in a North Carolina classroom some years from now.

"Once I was accepted to C-STEP, my worries were gone," she said.

And once she and other community college students transfer to UNC-CH or another institution within the state university system, the system's member schools know they will have fewer worries about their success. Such students typically have had a measure of life experience, whether working or raising children, and they know what they want. They tend to be diligent and focused. That the universities they attend benefit from having them on campus is an understatement.

The program is a good one. Not all students find their way in high school, but once they've hit the working world for a bit they get a better idea of what they want to become, and many gain a healthy respect for the true value of a university education.

So it's smart for UNC system institutions to recognize that, and to make it easier, through community college connections, for students to gain admission.

Further, the effort knits together the university and community college systems, which, though they're different, both want students to achieve the same result -- better jobs and better lives, and the chance to guide their children along the same pathways.

For the UNC system, the program means universities get students who've completed a couple of years of schooling, and thus the universities face less expense in moving them through to a degree. (Taxpayers and other funding sources subsidize public universities, allowing tuition to remain a relative bargain.)

The transfer students also can set great examples for undergrads with more conventional backgrounds. One student who's also moving from Wake Tech to Chapel Hill noted that once
she dropped out of college the first time around, she was occasionally homeless. "I look at this as a second chance," she said.

The C-STEP program is a manifestation of what the state means about a university system dedicated both to public service and to individual advancement. And yes, it's an example of how offering a chance to individuals can return it many fold to the state that provided it.

*All rights reserved. This copyrighted material may not be published, broadcast or redistributed in any manner.*

Comics, crosswords and coupons... only in The N&O print edition. Subscribe Now!

© Copyright 2009, The News & Observer Publishing Company

A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company
Yogurt may be used to deliver vaccine

SARAH AVERY, Staff Writer
Comment on this story

Bacteria common in yogurt may be more effective vehicles for delivering the anthrax vaccine than injections, scientists at N.C. State University have found.

In a study published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, an NCSU team and others reported attaching anthrax vaccine to ordinary L. acidophilus, benevolent bacteria that have a unique ability to deliver a drug payload to the immune system in the gut.

Impervious to stomach acids, modified bacteria safely ferry the vaccine past the stomach and into the small intestine for absorption.

"This is eating the good guys," said Todd Klaenhammer, a microbiologist in the departments of Food Science, Microbiology and Genetics at NCSU. "That's really the key. We're not making the good guys into the bad guys, just taking advantage of their properties and using their benefits."

The novel delivery system could eliminate one of the anthrax vaccine's most prevalent drawbacks -- its tendency to cause tenderness, pain and swelling at the injection site. Until recently, the vaccine was given repeatedly under the skin, which is a particularly painful way to administer a shot. Recent tests showed it could be given with an inoculation into muscle, but even that was painful, according to a study last year in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Anthrax is an infectious disease among wild domestic animals that can be transmitted to humans. It has the potential to be used in biological warfare, so inoculations have been required for military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It's not clear whether a new delivery system would eliminate much of the controversy surrounding the anthrax vaccine. The shot is suspected of being linked to Gulf War syndrome. The syndrome is associated with a cluster of ailments such as chronic fatigue, muscle aches and memory problems first reported by veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Dr. Meryl Nass, a physician and activist against the anthrax vaccine, said the NCSU approach could cut some of the toxicity from the injectable drug, which has additional ingredients to maintain its freshness. She said it's unknown what components of the vaccine cause some people to have reactions.

"Theoretically, it's a good way to administer a vaccine," Nass said.

The approach could also be expanded to other vaccines for diseases that are particularly tough to eradicate in less-developed countries, where storing and delivering injectable drugs is difficult. Klaenhammer said the NCSU innovation results in a powder that could either be encapsulated in pills or dissolved in water. He said additional studies will explore other vaccine targets.
Bomb threat is chilling news for campus paper

Hoax puts Daily Tar Heel staff outside on a crisp night with a story to get for UNC-CH students

ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writer
Comment on this story

CHAPEL HILL - This time, the news came to the newspaper.

Student journalists at UNC-Chapel Hill accustomed to chasing news had it delivered to their doorstep late Sunday when a bomb threat forced the evacuation of several campus buildings, including the student union. That's where the Daily Tar Heel has headquarters.

Booted from their newsroom, reporters and editors spent the next several hours huddled under a nearby streetlight in temperatures that hovered around the mid-30s.

Using the campus wireless network, they texted, Twittered and tapped away on their laptops. And they poked around campus while police put on a rare, visible display of force, shotguns at the ready.

"By 10 p.m., I could tell we wouldn't be able to wander around campus," recalled Allison Nichols, the DTH's editor in chief, who had shivered through the ordeal in flip-flops, on Monday. "There were a lot of police with big guns, and they were getting increasingly irritated with us. They were trying to do their jobs and we were a bunch of kids trying to figure out what we could do."

For hours, the paper's Web site, kept up to date by that small huddled mass under the streetlight, was a UNC-CH student's best source of information.

The bomb threat turned out to be a hoax.

But that wasn't determined until early in the morning, several hours after the newspaper's print deadline. Still, staff members scrambled and got a print version together for Monday's
"The only thing this person disrupted with this bomb threat on a Sunday night," Nichols said, "was me getting the paper out and maybe a handful of people studying."

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com or 919-932-2008.

Comics, crosswords and coupons... only in The N&O print edition. Subscribe Now!

© Copyright 2009, The News & Observer Publishing Company

A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company